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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: TURKISH STRAITS VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES - NEWEST  
VERSION

REF: A. ANKARA 6479

[1B.](#) STATE 178586

[¶1.](#) On November 8, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Deputy Director General for Energy, Hakkı Akil passed to Ambassador Steven Mann the newest version of the Turkish MFA's proposed "Voluntary Principles on the Passage of Oil Tankers through the Turkish Straits" (see Ref A). (This version is dated April 30, 2004, as is the version referred to in Ref B; however, the U.S. position described in Ref B appears to refer to an earlier version.)

[¶2.](#) Voluntary Principles text follows:

Voluntary Principles on the Passage of Oil Tankers through the Turkish Straits

The Governments of the Republic of Turkey, (the Black Sea Littoral States) (the European Union) and (the United States) ("Governments"), energy sector companies producing petroleum in the various countries of the Caspian region for export to world markets ("Companies") and non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") together ("Participants"), sharing an interest in promoting and protecting and promoting human health, safety and security, have engaged in a dialogue to produce a set of principles intended to minimize the risks associated with the passage of hydrocarbon tankers through the Turkish Straits ("the Straits"), without prejudice to the legal passage regime for the Straits and without unduly hindering flow of petroleum to world markets ("Principles").

The Participants recognize the importance of cooperative action and the constructive role which industry and civil society can play together with governments to achieve these objectives. The Participants further recognize the importance of continuing this dialogue and keeping under review these Principles in order to ensure their continuing relevance and efficacy.

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Recognizing that there are physical limits to the number of hydrocarbons tankers that can transit the Straits;

Considering that a secure and uninterrupted flow of energy has vital economic and national security significance to both energy producing and energy consuming States;

Appreciating that the Companies are committed to operations that are commercially viable and consistent with internationally recognized standards of corporate governance and social responsibility;

Reaffirming the obligation of States under accepted principles of international law to protect and preserve the marine environment;

Recognizing the EU policy in favour of the transport of hydrocarbons by pipelines as an alternative to transport by tankers through sensitive maritime seas;

Acknowledging that the protection of the environment in and around the Straits and of human health, safety and security of the local population is a fundamental value shared by the Participants;

Noting that the City of Istanbul has been designated as a World Heritage Site of outstanding and universal value by the UNESCO World Heritage Convention (UNESCO) and that the international community is thereby committed to participate cooperate in protecting it as a unique cultural and unique heritage for the benefit of both present and future generations;

Recalling that the Turkish Straits have previously experienced a number of serious shipping accidents resulting in the loss of life and environmental pollution and have threatened the City of Istanbul World Heritage Site;

Bearing in mind that the Governments should ensure that hydrocarbons tankers navigating through the Straits adhere to standards of 'quality shipping' as established by applicable rules and standards of international law including those adopted by the IMO as well as those promoted by the EC Commission;

Recognizing that the transport of hydrocarbons by pipelines constructed in accordance with the best available technology provides a safer and more environmentally friendly mode of transportation than by tankers through environmentally sensitive waters such as the Straits;

Accordingly, the Participants hereby express their support for the following Voluntary Principles for the Passage of Oil Tankers through the Turkish Straits:

Pursuit of Turkish Straits By-pass Alternatives

- The Participants agree that priority should be given to maximizing the use of existing and future crude oil export transportation systems that by-pass the Straits;

- The Participants further agree to facilitate and support the development of new-build crude export oil transportation systems that by-pass the Straits and are constructed and operated in accordance with the highest international technical, safety, environmental, labour and human rights standards and practices

Cooperative Government Measures

The Governments agree to consider and discuss the adoption of cooperative measures, consistent with international law in order to enhance protection of the environment and the safety and security of the Straits.

Monitoring and Enforcement Review

The Participants agree to monitor adherence to these Principles and to transparently report on compliance. They agree to review them periodically and revise them as necessary.

EDELMAN